WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1. A coating formulation for drywall application comprising water, a binder, a filler comprising at least about 60% by weight CaCO₃, and a noncellulosic thickener.
 - 2. The coating formulation of claim 1, further comprising a dispersant.
- 3. The coating formulation of claim 2, further comprising about 0.1 to about 20% by weight anti-cracking agent and about 0.1 to about 5% by weight workability agent.
- 4. The coating formulation of claim 3, wherein the anti-cracking agent is mica and the workability agent is clay.
- 5. The coating formulation of claim 3, wherein the binder is present in an amount of about 0.5 to about 15% by weight, the dispersant is present in an amount of about 0.5 to about 15% by weight and the thickener is present in an amount of about 0.05 to about 50% by weight.
 - 6. The coating formulation of claim 2, wherein the binder is a latex binder.
- 7. The coating formulation of claim 6, wherein the binder is an acrylic latex binder.
- 8. The coating formulation of claim 7, wherein the acrylic latex is present in an amount of about 0.5 to about 15% by weight, the dispersant is present in an amount of about 0.5 to about 15% by weight and the thickener is present in an amount of about 0.05 to about 50% by weight.
- 9. The coating formulation of claim 2, wherein the dispersant comprises a sodium polyacrylate.

- 10. The coating formulation of claim 1, wherein the thickener comprises a copolymer of an acrylic acid and an acrylic ester.
- 11. The coating formulation of claim 1, wherein the filler comprises at least about 75% by weight CaCO₃.
- 12. The coating formulation of claim 3, wherein the filler comprises at least about 75% by weight CaCO₃.
- 13. The coating formulation of claim 1, wherein the filler further comprises magnesium carbonate, dolomite, gypsum, anhydrite, or mixtures thereof.
- 14. A coating formulation for drywall application comprising: about 0.5 to about 15% by weight of a latex binder, about 40 to about 70% by weight of a filler comprising at least about 60% by weight CaCO₃,

about 0.5 to about 15% by weight of a dispersant,
about 0.05 to about 50% by weight of a noncellulosic thickener, and
water in an amount sufficient to provide a viscosity for the formulation of
about 300 to about 450 cps.

- 15. The coating formulation of claim 14, further comprising about 0.1 to about 20% by weight anti-cracking agent and about 0.1 to about 5% by weight workability agent.
- 16. The coating formulation of claim 15, wherein the anti-cracking agent is mica and the workability agent is clay.
- 17. The coating formulation of claim 15, wherein the dispersant comprises a sodium polyacrylate.

18. The coating formulation of claim 14, wherein the formulation comprises about 1.0 to about 4.0% by weight of a latex binder,

about 45 to about 65% by weight of a filler comprising at least about 75% by weight CaCO₃,

about 2.0 to about 9.0% by weight of a dispersant, about 0.1 to about 5.0% by weight of a noncellulosic thickener

- 19. The coating formulation of claim 14, wherein the latex binder comprises an acrylic latex binder.
- 20. The coating formulation of claim 14, wherein the thickener comprises a copolymer of an acrylic acid and an acrylic ester.
- 21. The coating formulation of claim 14, wherein the filler comprises at least about 75% by weight CaCO₃.
- 22. The coating formulation of claim 15, wherein the filler comprises at least about 75% by weight CaCO₃.
- 23. The coating formulation of claim 14, wherein the filler further comprises magnesium carbonate, dolomite, gypsum, anhydrite, or mixtures thereof.
 - 24. A construction assembly for interior walls, comprising:

skim coated drywall elements comprising drywall elements having at least one skim coat deposited on the drywall elements, the skim coat formed from a coating formulation comprising water, a binder, a filler comprising at least about 60% by weight CaCO₃, and a noncellulosic thickener; and

at least one jointing material jointing the skim coated drywall elements to form a substantially plane outer surface.

- 25. The construction assembly of claim 24, wherein the at least one jointing material and the at least one skim coat form, in the dry state, a substantially homogeneous outer surface on the substantially plane outer surface.
- 26. The construction assembly of claim 24, wherein the drywall elements are flat, prefabricated elements.
- 27. The construction assembly of claim 26, wherein the flat, prefabricated elements are gypsum wallboard.
- 28. The construction assembly of claim 24, wherein the skim coat when dry has a thickness of between about 5 and about 60 mil.
- 29. The construction assembly of claim 25, wherein the substantially homogeneous outer surface comprises a level 5 finish.
- 30. The construction assembly of claim 24, wherein the skim coat is formed from a coating formulation further comprising about 0.1 to about 20% by weight anti-cracking agent and about 0.1 to about 5% by weight workability agent.
- 31. The construction assembly of claim 30, wherein the anti-cracking agent is mica and the workability agent is clay.
- 32. The construction assembly of claim 30, wherein the coating formulation further comprises a dispersant.
- 33. The construction assembly of claim 32, wherein the binder is present in an amount of about 0.5 to about 15% by weight, the dispersant is present in an amount of about 0.5 to about 15% by weight and the thickener is present in an amount of about 0.05 to about 50% by weight.

- 34. The construction assembly of claim 32, wherein the binder is an acrylic latex binder.
- 35. The construction assembly of claim 34, wherein the acrylic latex binder is present in an amount of about 0.5 to about 15% by weight, the dispersant is present in an amount of about 0.5 to about 15% by weight and the thickener is present in an amount of about 0.05 to about 50% by weight.
- 36. The construction assembly of claim 32, wherein the dispersant comprises a sodium polyacrylate.
- 37. The construction assembly of claim 24, wherein the thickener comprises a copolymer of an acrylic acid and an acrylic ester.
- 38. A method for the construction of interior walls comprising: assembling skim coated prefabricated drywall elements, wherein the skim coated prefabricated drywall elements have a coating layer formed from a coating formulation comprising water, a binder, a filler comprising at least about 60% by weight CaCO₃, and a noncellulosic thickener, and are formed of at least one skim coat deposited on the prefabricated drywall elements by a coating device;

jointing adjacent prefabricated drywall elements with a jointing material to form joints; and

drying the jointing material.

- 39. The method of claim 38, wherein the jointing material and the at least one skim coat form, in the dry state, a substantially homogeneous outer surface for the entire surface formed from the jointing material and skim coated prefabricated drywall elements.
- 40. The method of claim 39, wherein the substantially homogeneous outer surface comprises a level 5 finish.

- 41. The method of claim 38, wherein the skim coat when dry has a thickness of between about 5 and about 60 mil.
- 42. The method of claim 38, wherein the skim coat is deposited on the prefabricated drywall elements by spraying during prefabrication of the drywall elements.
- 43. The method of claim 38, wherein the skim coat is deposited after assembly of the skim coated prefabricated drywall elements.
- 44. The method of claim 38, wherein the coating formulation further comprises about 0.1 to about 20% by weight mica and about 0.1 to about 5% by weight clay.
- 45. The method of claim 38, wherein coating formulation further comprises a dispersant.
 - 46. The method of claim 45, wherein the binder is an acrylic latex binder.
- 47. The method of claim 46, wherein the acrylic latex binder is present in an amount of about 0.5 to about 15% by weight, the dispersant is present in an amount of about 0.5 to about 15% by weight and the thickener is present in an amount of about 0.05 to about 50% by weight.
- 48. The method of claim 45, wherein the dispersant is a sodium polyacrylate.
- 49. The method of claim 45, wherein the thickener comprises a copolymer of an acrylic acid and an acrylic ester.
- 50. The method of claim 38, wherein the prefabricated drywall elements are gypsum wallboard.

- 51. A flat, prefabricated drywall element comprising a core of plaster or gypsum having at least one sheet of lining paper and a coating layer formed of at least one skim coat deposited on the lining paper, the skim coat formed from a coating formulation comprising water, a binder, a filler comprising at least about 60% by weight CaCO₃, and a noncellulosic thickener.
- 52. The flat, prefabricated drywall element of claim 51, wherein the coating formulation further comprises a dispersant.
- 53. The flat, prefabricated drywall element of claim 51, wherein the binder is an acrylic latex binder.